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ESTHER

Queen of Persia

A Scriptural Play in 5 Acts.

BY

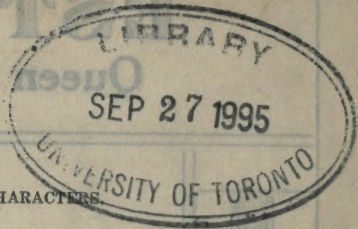
JANIE JACOBSON



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PHILADELPHIA
JULIUS H. GREENSTONE
1921

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

1 ESTHER, afterwards Queen of Persia.

2 VASHTI, a banished queen.

3 ZULISSIMAR

4 KATHOLITA

5 NERISSA

} Persian maids attendant on Vashti.

Flower Girls

Hebrew Maidens

} as many as may be desired.

6 SARETTA, a little friend of Esther.

1 ACHASHVEROSH, King of Persia.

4 Seven Chamberlains.

7 HEGAI, keeper of the women.

CHARBONA

BIGTHAN

TERESH

} Conspirators.

9 HAMAN, Prime Minister to King (also Memuchan).

10-11 Hebrew Citizens (as many as may be desired).

12 MORDECAL.

13 NASSUR, a Persian.

8 TERZA, a Prophetess.

9 ZERESH, wife of Haman.

PHILADELPHIA
JULIUS H. GREENSTONE
1951

Esther, Queen of Persia.

ACT I.

QUEEN VASHTI'S BANQUET.

(A long table on which are placed handsome bowls, silver dishes, etc., gold and rich hangings strewn about. Queen Vashti seated at centre of table, her seat placed higher than those of her maidens. Queen Vashti dressed in royal robes as befitting the occasion.)

Queen Vashti (*turning to her maidens*)—King Achashverosh hath also made a feast to the reigning princes and it is but fitting we do likewise. Come, my women of the household, and ye are all assembled—drink to the health of my lord and King, the illustrious Achashverosh, who reigns from India even unto Ethiopia, and who now sits in the palace of Shushan. (*All drink, exclaiming*), “Long live King Achashverosh. (*Three times said.*)

Queen Vashti (*lifting up goblet*)—To the reigning princes. (*All exclaim*)—To the reigning princes.

Queen Vashti—Come, Zulissimar, tell me what thou knowest.

Zulissimar (*bowing*)—All I know is that thine hair is as black as the raven's wing.

Queen Vashti—Thou art an arch flatterer, but thou, Nestina, what canst thou say?

Nestina (*bowing*)—Thine eyes are like twin stars that softly beam in even time.

Vashti—If I were not queen thou wouldst not flatter me thus, but hark! (*listens to right of stage*). Methought some one was knocking at the outer door. (*All listen, knocking is heard louder.*)

Queen Vashti (*in surprise*)—What portends this? Go, Katholita, and open the door. (*Katholita goes to right of stage, opens door, comes to Queen and bows.*)

Vashti—Who stands without?

Katholita—Chamberlains of the King to Queen Vashti.

Vashti (*in great surprise*)—Chamberlains of the King! What would they with Queen Vashti?

Katholita—They bring with them a message from the King.

(*All maidens rise and repeat with surprise written on their faces*)—A message from the King!

Vashti—Bid them enter. (*Katholita escorts the Chamberlains of the King to Vashti. They bow in reverence to her.*)

Chamberlains—We, Mehuman, Bistha, Charbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar and Carcass, the seven Chamberlains that serve the illustrious Achashverosh, have been commanded to appear before you and bring you into the presence of the King, that he may show your beauty to the royal princes

that are now assembled in the palace of the King at Shushan.

Vashti (*in amazement and anger*)—You are asked by the King to bring me in my royal robes to show myself to the princes that are assembled? Go forth with this message back to the King that I refuse to appear before him. (*The Chamberlains bow as before and go out left of stage.*)

Vashti (*tries to banish the angry thoughts within her*)—Come, maidens! Sing, sing, and be merry.

Maidens (*singing*)—We let no care sit on our brow. We will be merry, merry, now. We will be merry, merry now.

Vashti—Methought I heard again a knocking at the outer door. Go, Zulissimar, attend. (*Zulissimar bows, goes to right.*)

(*Enter Chamberlains as before, headed by Memuchan.*)

Memuchan—By order of the King, Queen Vashti.

Queen Vashti (*terrified*)—By order of the King?

Memuchan (*reads from parchment scroll*)—"Whereas, Queen Vashti hath refused to appear before her royal husband and King, a royal order hath gone forth that the said Vashti be put away, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and Medes that no one transgress it and that Vashti come no more before King Achashverosh, and that the King give her royal dignity unto another that is better than she." Signed with the royal seal of King Achashverosh, of the Persians and Medes.

(*Vashti stands confounded and the maidens all talking in hushed whispers, and the Chamberlains retire slowly L. S. Dramatic music playing.*)

Vashti (*as if waking from a dream*)—"And let the King give her royal dignity unto another that is better than she!" (*Said very slowly.*)

Maidens (*getting up to depart, singing as they go*):

Vashti's glory hath departed,

Vashti hath been put away,

Vashti is sore, broken hearted,

And with her we cannot stay.

(*Some to right of S. some to L. off.*)

Vashti (*alone, gazes around as if she scarce realizes what has happened, repeats*)—"That Vashti come no more before the King and let the King give her royal dignity unto another that is better than she!" (*Puts her hands to her head, sits on floor, head on throne.*)

Curtain.

ACT II.

MORDECAI'S HOME

(*Furnished as near as possible in Eastern style, low divans for loungings.*)

Window looking toward East. Esther seated near listening to Benoi.)

Esther—Read me again, dear Benoi, something from out the past—that great and glorious past. How my heart aches even now for those exiles that were carried away from that fair city, Jerusalem! Thou didst know, yea, that beloved Uncle Mordecai was one of those that were exiled?

Benoi—Yes, Esther. Oft and oft hath the good Mordecai kept me spellbound with the story of the beautiful city laid waste by the heathen, and how he had been carried away.

Esther—The dear, good God that we both revere preserve him to me for many a year. Thou canst not imagine how good he hath been to me, Benoi.

Benoi—Yea, dear Esther, his face bespeaks the true, noble-hearted soul.

Esther—I that was bereft of father and mother, he took me, nursed me, tended me and watched o'er me. I owe him much, dear, noble uncle.

Benoi—His care hath been rewarded, dear Esther. Thou art the sweetest flower that grows in all Shushan.

Esther—Fie, fie, Benoi. Thou art an arch flatterer. But see (*looks out window*), our little Saretta is running this way so quickly, all excitement. What aileth the child? (*Saretta enters R. from window.*)

Saretta—Oh, Esther, oh! Esther, didst thou hear the news?

Esther—Hear the news! How should I, child? I scarce walk through the gates of Shushan, but thy face bespeaks news of interest.

Saretta—Interest! The whole of Shushan is at the palace gate listening to the decree of King Achashverosh.

Esther and Benoi (*together*)—The decree of King Achashverosh!

Saretta—Yea! Queen Vashti hath refused to appear before the King and he hath decreed she be put away and another take her place.

Esther—Poor Queen! How glad I am that I am Esther. What fortitude it must take to be Persia's Queen. God grant that the good King chooses well.

(*Mordecai enters. Esther runs to him.*)

Esther—Beloved Mordecai! Thou, too, hath heard the news?

Mordecai—Yes, my child, and I also heard that all maidens of Shushan and of the provinces were to be gathered together and taken to the palace of Shushan, and there amongst them he would choose a maiden to become his Queen in place of Vashti.

Esther (*clinging to Mordecai*)—Thou wouldst not let me be among them?

Mordecai—Nay, nay, my child, the light of mine eyes; be not frightened! Thy destiny, my destiny, yea, of each and all of us is in the hands of the dear, good God who grants us strength. (*A knock is heard. Mordecai opens the door.*)

Hegai—In the name of the King! (*Hegai is struck with the beauty of Esther*) I have been commanded by King Achashverosh to gather together all the maidens of Shushan and the provinces, from whom one will be chosen to take the place of Vashti, and I, Hegai, am most pleased with thee out of all the women I have seen and gathered together. Therefore, I will now bring thee unto the King!

Esther—No! no! I cannot leave dear Mordecai, my guardian.

Saretta (*comes closer to Esther*)—Thou wouldst be Queen, dear Esther!

Esther—Nay, Saretta, say not so.

Hegai—Come, beauteous maiden. The sun is sinking in the West and we must go to the palace, and I myself will see that no harm befall thee. I, Hegai, the keeper of the women.

Esther—Mordecai, beloved one! My heart is sore at leaving thee. I know not what will befall me. Oh, Mordecai, dear Mordecai. I am only a simple maid.

Mordecai—Hath my teachings been for naught? Doth not the sacred book say "Strength cometh from the Lord," and He will give His Angels charge concerning thee to guard thee and keep thee in all thy ways. Go with Hegai, and God bless thee. (*Esther goes with Hegai.*)

Mordecai—I charge thee by all thou holdest dear to keep secret thy descent.

(*Esther goes out looking longingly at Mordecai, soft music playing.*)

Mordecai (*turning to Benoi and Saretta*)—Let us offer a prayer for our dear one's safety. (*Music softly plays. Each is in silent devotion, lips moving till curtain goes down.*)

Curtain.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

(*A court yard in the palace of Shushan, Exits, middle R. and L.*)

Persians, Hebrews and citizens passing up and down, talking among themselves.

Mordecai is seen sitting before the middle door of court yard.

Mordecai knocks, and door is opened by Hegai.)

Mordecai—Is all well with Hadassah?

Hegai—All is well with the maiden. She hath found favor in the sight of all those who have gazed upon her as also with the King himself. He loveth her well.

Mordecai—God be praised. Go tell her that Mordecai hath enquired as to her welfare each day and that his heart delights to know she hath found favor with the King.

Hegai—I will your message give to the maiden. (*Hegai retires, Mordecai turns and sees Bigthan and Teresh in deep converse. He listens, unknown to them.*)

First Citizens—Good morrow, good Mordecai, thou art well?

Mordecai—All is well with me, friend citizen.

Second Citizen—So a new queen will grace the Persian throne?

Mordecai—God inspire her heart with wisdom to reign over her people.

Citizens—Aye! aye! God grant it. (*As this is said from far and near is heard music with the following words*: Esther hath been chosen to grace the Persian throne. (*The music comes nearer*) Esther hath been chosen for herself alone (*girls come from right and left, singing above refrain. At this minute Esther appears from R., King from L., with princes, courtiers and Haman behind King. All bow with great deference before Haman except Mordecai, which seems to disturb Haman. King goes over to Esther and advances toward her. Esther half kneels. The King raises her and takes her hand. King sings*):

Oh, Queen of my heart,
A captive am I,
To thy beauteous charms
And sweet modesty.
Thou dear Persian flower
Oh, be not afraid,
Thou wilt be my Queen,
My sweet Persian maid.

(*Refrain taken up on stage*):

Yes! She will be Queen

This sweet Persian maid.

King—I have chosen thee to be my queen from all the virgins to be found in my kingdom. I have chosen thee not alone because thou art so beautiful, but for thy modesty, thy sweetness, thy goodness which seem writ on thy fair brow. Now (*turning to officers, etc., etc.*), have ready the throne room for the crowning of our Queen Esther, my queen. I await thee in the throne room. Until then thou art in charge of Hegai. (*All out except Persian citizen and Haman and Mordecai, who goes over alone to Esther.*)

Mordecai—God bless and keep thee, dear one, in thy

high estate. I charge thee by all thou holdest dear tell naught of thy origin or race.

Esther—Thy commands I will obey, beloved Mordecai. Oh, would that someone else had been chosen Queen beside myself.

Mordecai—Everything in this life, my child, is done for a wise purpose. Not a leaf falleth but what the Almighty knows the wherefore. His ways are not ours, and I charge thee also when thou goest with the King (*looks around to see no one is looking at him*), tell him I have discovered a plot against his life (*tells her in secret*). Now, beloved, farewell! God keep thee. Hegai, here is your charge. (*Hegai and Esther go out L.*)

Haman (*to Messur*)—Who and what is he that failed to give me deference due when the King was present? It hurteth my pride that this was not done to me, to me, the Prime Minister of Persia over the dominions of the King?

Messur—His name is Mordecai, the Jew, and he is forever and ever, morn, noon and evening, sitting at the King's gate.

Haman (*with vindictive hatred*)—Ah! ah! Mordecai, the Jew! For his insolence to me who am next to the King, his whole race shall suffer. I shall hie me to Zeresh, my wife, and there plot and plan to exterminate the race of Mordecai, the Jew. (*Just as he is about to go off stage R. he is stopped by Terzah.*)

Terzah—Hold, Haman, hold!

Haman—What wouldst thou?

Terzah—I thy fortune would foretell.

Haman—My fortune I know woman. Let me pass on.

Terzah (*sings*):

Oh, Haman! oh, Haman!
Thy heart is filled with hate.
(*He starts.*)

Oh, Haman! oh, Haman!
Repent before too late.

(*Haman wants to crush her. Terzah backs away from him.*)

Terzah—

Oh, Haman! oh, Haman!
Thou goest to thy doom.
Oh, Haman! oh, Haman!
I see naught but gloom.
The stars they have said it,
Thou art building a building for thy tomb.
Thy tomb.

Haman—Get thee gone with thy evil forbodings. I care not, I, Haman. Naught can befall me, naught can befall me.

(*Haman R. exit.*) Terzah—(*sings to herself L. exit*): All is gloom, all is gloom.

Heard in distance—Long live Queen Esther! Long live Queen Esther! (*Mordecai, alone prays while music softly plays.*)

God, in goodness her safety keep,
Thy wondrous eye, it doth not sleep.
For she is but a simple child,
Keep her pure and undefiled.
For the paths that she now will tread
Where flatterers their net do spread.
Help her, oh, God! Help her I pray,
Be thou her shield, now and alway.

Curtain.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

HOUSE OF HAMAN, WITH FRIENDS AND WIFE.

Haman (*to wife*)—Thou canst not believe how I felt when Mordecai, the Jew, did not bow down to me. Insufferable Jew!

Zeresh—Thou must listen to thy wife and do as I bid thee.

Haman—What wouldst thou?

Zeresh—Thou must plot to get Mordecai out of the way.

Haman (*thinking deeply*)—Ah! I have it! Friends, listen! We will cast lots to destroy this race of Mordecai. Until that is done my hatred will not be appeased.

First Friend—'Tis well, friend Haman.

Haman—Thou knowest of my riches, my power, my children, and this Mordecai to defy me thus is unbearable to my pride. Come, Come, we will lay a plot to kill him.

Zeresh—Yea, put a gallows up fifty cubits high.

Haman—'Tis good! It shall be done, and after that to the King's palace I will go. My heart is merry with the work I shall do (*laughs sardonically, embraces wife, friends exeunt with Haman*).

Curtain.

SCENE II.

(*Banquet in the royal palace of Shushan. King and Queen Esther on the throne. Curtain goes up and maidens advance from R. to L., with garlands of flowers, singing*):

Hail, hail, hail, hail,

Hail this happy day,

We will strew garlands

At her feet to lay.

(*Lay them around Esther.*)

Hail, hail, hail, hail,
Happy King is he,
Who hath won Hadassah,
Long live he and she.
Long live he and she.

King—Now, Queen Esther, what wilt thou on this festive occasion?

Esther—Naught, O King! only that I might retire with my maidens to refresh myself for the coming festivities.

King—So be it, beloved one. (*Esther retires with her maidens and King is alone.*)

Chamberlain (*to King*)—Haman is in the court and wishes an audience with thee, O King! (*Bows.*)

King—Bid him enter. (*Chamberlain bows and enter Haman R.*)

King—What is thy pleasure, Haman? Speak!

Haman—There is a certain people, scattered, yet separated, among the nations in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are different from those of every people; while they do not execute the laws of the King and it is no profit for the King to tolerate them. If it be pleasing unto thee, O King, let a decree be written to destroy them, and ten thousand talents of silver will I weigh out into the hands of those that have charge of the business to bring the same into the King's treasuries.

King (*drawing his signet ring from his finger*)—Here is my signet ring in token of my approval. The silver is also given to thee, the people also to do therewith as it seemeth good in thine eyes. Go, call the scribe that I can put my seal and I will write the decree. (*Haman brings in scribe from L. King writes and hands parchment to Haman.*)

Haman—I thank thee, O King! for reposing such confidence in me. I will do thy bidding at once.

(*Aside.*) My bidding, my bidding. How sweet is revenge!

King—The hour is late and I shall retire. Come. (*King retires.*)

Curtain.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

(*Throne room in the Court of Shushan.*
Queen Esther surrounded by her maidens, seated on throne.)

Esther (*turning to one of the maidens*)—It is now some days since I saw Mordecai, nor have I heard aught of him. I hope all is well, but hark! Methinks there was a knocking at the outer gate. Go, Saretta, and open. (*Saretta goes.*)

Saretta—O Queen! there is one who seeks an audience with thee.

Esther (*in surprise*)—An audience with me! Inquire his name.

Saretta (*S. comes back*)—His name is Benoi and he brings a message from Mordecai.

Esther—Bid him enter. (*Benoi enters R.*) Ah, Benoi, thou bringest me news of Mordecai. What sayest thou? He is well?

Benoi—O, Queen, live long! Mordecai is well.

Esther—Thou speakest vaguely. Thy looks belie thee. Why art thou sad and so disquieted?

Benoi—Mordecai bade me tell thee some direful news.

Esther—Direful news! Direful news! (*With troubled air.*) I will not hear them from thee. Go, go for Mordecai. I long for him now. (*Benoi goes out L.*) My heart standeth still. I know not what this means. Oh, Mordecai! oh, Mordecai (*enters at R. Mordecai with Benoi. Esther embraces him.*)

Esther—Thou art downcast. Thou art sad. Thou art clothed in mourning. What dire calamity threatens thee?

Mordecai—Alas! my child. The glory of Israel has departed. Woe is upon us, woe is upon us. We have been sold. We have been betrayed, to be slain and to be exterminated by the order of Haman on the 15th day of Adar, and I come to you, my child, in this hour of trial, to save us from death.

Esther (*listening all the time with great feeling and shudders*)—I, Mordecai! I, the Queen! What can I do. My hands are tied.

Mordecai—'Tis you, my child. You alone must go unto the King to intercede for our people.

Esther—Thou canst not mean what thou sayest. I dare not go in unto the King unbidden, for to do so means death, unless he holds out the golden sceptre and I have not been sent for in many days.

Mordecai—Do not imagine because thou art queen thou canst escape the penalty, for if thou maintainest silence now, deliverance will arise from another place; but thou and thy father's house will perish and who knows but what God hath placed thee on the throne of Persia for such a time as this.

(*Esther listens while Mordecai speaks and her frightened manner has disappeared, her form and face seem buoyed up with heroic courage.*)

Esther—Go. assemble all the Jews that are here in Persia. (*Mordecai goes out from L. and R. enter the whole caste except Haman and Zeresh, Esther, Mordecai and Benoi occupy centre stage.*) Oh, my people, Israel!

Esther—In this hour of deep, dire calamity, we will call on the name of the Lord. Fast ye and pray for me. (*Music plays softly.*) Fast ye and pray for me, oh Israel, and I will go unto the King, though not according to the law, and if I perish, I perish. (*Taken up by all except Esther.*) She will go unto the King, though not according to the law, and if she doth perish, she doth perish.

Esther—Let my cry come near before thee. (*Prays.*) Oh, Lord, give me understanding according to Thy Word. Let my supplication come before Thee: deliver me according to Thy Word. Let Thine hand help me, for I have chosen Thy precepts. To die, to die for those we love is better, far better than to wear a crown, than to wear a crown.

Refrain taken up by all—To die, to die for those we love is better far than to wear a crown, than to wear a crown.

Tableau.

Curtain.

ACT IV.

SCENE II.

(*In the inner court of the Palace of Shushan. King Achashverosh seated on his throne with golden sceptre in hand. Esther approaching from left with great trepidation. She is dressed in her royal robes.*)

(*Music plays dramatically. Esther's hand to heart.*)

Esther—

Cease, cease, my heart, cease these wild flutterings.

Oh, God! give me strength for my utterings.

Oh, Israel! beloved, you whom I cherish,

I go to the King, though I should perish, though I should perish.

(*Comes before the King, he looks at first angry, then joy spreads over his face. He holds out the golden sceptre to her. Esther touches the top.*)

King—What wilt thou, Queen Esther, and what is thy request? Even if it be half of my kingdom it shall be given thee.

Esther—If it seems good unto the King, let the King and Haman come this day unto the banquet which I have prepared for them.

King—Thy desire shall be fulfilled, Queen Esther.

Esther—I thank thee, oh, King, that I have found grace in thine eyes. (*Bending her knees ere she goes out halfway across the stage.*) Oh, God! thy mercies are continuing. Thou hast not forgotten Thy child. Bless my coming in, and bless my going forth. (*Exit L.*)

King (*to Chamberlain standing by*)—My thoughts trouble me. Bring thou in the book of chronicles and read therein the events, perchance I shall feel better. (*Chamberlain goes out and brings chronicles and reads*): Whereas,

Mordecai hath told of Bigthan and Teresh, two Chamberlains of the King, of those who kept the door who had sought to lay their hands on King Achashverosh.

King (*turning to Chamberlain*)—What honor and distinction hath been given to this Mordecai for saving my life?

Chamberlain—Nothing has been done, O King.

King—Who is in the court?

Chamberlain—Haman is in the court.

King—Bid him enter. (*Enter Haman R. Bows.*)

Haman—What is thy desire, O King!

King—What shall be done with the man whom the King desireth to honor?

Haman (*aside*)—This can be none other than myself. I, Haman, next to the King. If it pleases the King, let the royal apparel be brought and the horse that the King rideth upon, and cause him to be arrayed and to ride through the streets of the city and to have proclaimed before him: "Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the King delighteth to honor."

King—That is good. Make haste and take the apparel and the horse that the King rideth on and do this to Mordecai, the Jew.

Haman (*in amazement aside*)—Mordecai, the Jew! What hath befallen me? Is it that my star hath set? No! no! no! There is still the decree and the gallows which I have prepared. Aye! which I have prepared.

Curtain.

ACT VI.

SCENE I.

(*Banqueting Hall in the Palace of Shushan, Esther on the throne in C. of S. King at R., Haman L.*)

King—I am here, my Queen, with Haman, to grace thy banquet. What is thy request? What is thy petition, and it shall be granted unto thee, even if it be half of my kingdom. It shall be done.,

Esther (*rising slowly and bowing to the King with half inclined body toward him*)—If I have found grace in thine eyes, O King! If it be pleasing unto the King let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request.

(*Haman seems dumbfounded and fear is written on his countenance.*)

Esther—For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to be exterminated, and if we had only been sold as bondsmen and bondswomen I would have remained silent, but the adversary regarded not the damage of the King.

King—Who is he and where is he whose heart is so wicked as to do this dreadful thing?

Esther—This adversary, this black-hearted man. There he is, the wicked Haman (*points to Haman*). (*Haman falls at the feet of Esther. King gets up and walks away in his anger. Turns and sees Haman holding the Queen's robe.*)

King—Thou vile wretch. Wilt thou, too, desecrate my Queen? Thy touch is contamination. Charbona! Charbona! Come forth, I say! Come forth! (*Charbona L. S. enters.*) What shall be done with this vile, contemptible man?

Charbona—Behold! oh, King, there is a gallows which Haman hath made for Mordecai, who hath always spoken so well of the King. It stands in the house of Haman, fifty cubits high.

King—Hang him thereon. (*Haman taken away by Charbona, exit R. S.*)

King—What more can I do for thee, beloved Queen?

Esther—If it be pleasing to the King and I have found favor in thy sight let it be written to recall the letters, the decree of Haman which meant the extermination of my race who dwell in all the provinces of thy kingdom, for how could I endure to look on the evil that is to befall my beloved people?

King—Send for the good Mordecai. (*Esther sends for him. Enter Mordecai R.*)

King—Ah, good, honored Mordecai, behold I entrust to you the rescinding of the decree. Write, write ye yourself concerning your people, the Jews, as it may be good in your eyes. Seal it with my signet ring and put it in my name so that it cannot be recalled.

Mordecai—My heart is filled with gratitude, O, King.

King—Gratitude! It is I whose heart should be filled with such. Didst thou not save my life, and now shall I requite thee by the only act I can in trying to right the wrong done by the wicked Haman.

Mordecai—Nay! I did but do my duty, with the help of the good God.

King—So, my beloved Queen is thy niece. I did not learn this till now, and she showed courage, brave like her uncle, the good Mordecai.

Mordecai—She did what her true, noble heart dictated her.

King—She is the sweetest, most perfect flower in my kingdom. Not Hadassah as thou callest her, but my Esther, my star. The rarest jewel in my kingdom. Is thy heart satisfied?

Esther—Yea! my lord King. Now that my dear people are safe from the hands of the wicked Haman, it is but fitting I should give praise to Him from whom all blessings flow, and I make this, the fifteenth day of the month of Adar, a feast day of entertainment and joy forever and ever. Go, dearest Mordecai, and call our brethren together to rejoice with us in this hour of deliverance. (*Mordecai goes to R., all assemble on stage. Mordecai, Esther and King in the centre. Soft music plays.*)

Esther—My beloved people, God in His wonderful mercy hath heard my petition. We have been saved from destruction this day, in commemoration of which I command you to keep the Feast of Purim.

King—Not alone shall the Feast of Purim be kept forever and ever in honor of the heroism of my dear Queen Esther, my star, but I appoint Mordecai, the Jew, second in rank after myself to administer to all the provinces in my domains. Long live our noble Mordecai.

All—Long live our noble Mordecai!

King—Long live our noble Queen.

All—Long live Queen Esther.

Esther—Thank you, my King, for your good wishes and you, beloved people. It is but fitting that for our merciful preservation this day we shall sing a song of praise to Him on high. (*All chant Psalm 145.*) "I will extol thee, my God, O King, and I will bless Thy name forever and ever. Every day will I bless thee and I will praise Thy name for ever and ever. Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth. The Lord preserveth all them that love Him, but all the wicked will He destroy. My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord and let all flesh bless His holy name forever and ever."

(*Curtain goes down a minute, rises again, disclosing a figure of a girl robed in white, on head printed, "Spirit of Purim."* Each side little girls, as many as may be desired, on head, "A Happy Purim," written in large letters.)

EPILOGUE

THE SPIRIT OF PURIM.

I speak of the Spirit of Purim, the Purim we love so dear,
I come to bring you a message, a message of love and cheer.
You have listened to the story, the story of long ago,
How Esther and dear Mordecai did Haman overthrow.
In our great book 'tis written, 'tis open for you to read,
That on this day of Purim, the needy we must heed.
And on this joyful occasion should always bear in mind
In loving acts of kindness we must not be behind.

Come, come, come, Happy Purim (*turning to her little girls*).
out with your gifts, I say,

For I want to make happy each boy and girl today.

And they in their turn will do likewise, I know, yes, that
they will,

For that means the Spirit of Purim, which our dear Esther
did instill.

Just one word more, my children, one word more I say,

God showered His choicest gifts on you and blesses you every
day.

Now for a happy Purim, with lots of fun and cheer,

So I take my leave of you until the Purim of next year.

All exclaim—A Happy Purim. (*Gifts are given out.*)

Curtain.

EPILOGUE

In loving acts of kindness we must not be behind.
And on this joyous occasion should always bear in mind
That on this day of Purim, the needy we must heed.
In our great book 'tis written, 'tis open for you to read.
How Esther and dear Mordecai did Haman overthrow.
You have listened to the story, the story of long ago.
I come to bring you a message, a message of love and cheer.
I speak of the Spirit of Purim, the Purim we have so dear.
And all around us, wherever we turn, we find
The spirit of Purim, the spirit of love and cheer.